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CENTRAL FAX CENTER****MAR 26 2008****IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently amended) A method for organizing e-mail messages comprising the steps of:

- indicating at least one first e-mail message in a user mailbox;
- associating the at least one first e-mail with a second e-mail by enabling an association option; and
- forming an associated group of e-mails in the user mailbox comprising at least two or more associated e-mails.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of associating further comprises the steps of:

- enabling an options list to appear with respect to the at least one first e-mail message;
- selecting an associate option on the options list; and
- indicating the second e-mail; wherein the second e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the at least one first e-mail to form the associated group of e-mails.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of providing a show associations and a hide associations option on the options list.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of showing the associated first and second e-mails of a sent e-mail message to a recipient when the show associations option is selected.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of hiding the associated group of e-mails of a sent e-mail message from a recipient when the hide associations option is selected.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a collapsability and expandability feature for the associated group.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of providing a first graphical indicator for indicating when the associated group is expanded and a second graphical indicator for indicating when the associated group is collapsed.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing e-mail operations for performing on the associated group of e-mails.

9. (Currently amended) A method for organizing e-mail messages comprising the steps of:

creating a user-defined discussion topic heading, said discussion topic heading appearing as an entry in at least one of the a user's mailboxes; and

associating at least one e-mail message to the user-defined discussion topic heading to form an associated e-mail-to-topic group;

selecting at least one of a show associations option and a hide associations option on a reply e-mail to be sent to a recipient; and

showing at least one of the discussion topic heading and associated e-mails of the reply e-mail to the recipient if the show associations option is selected.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of associating further comprises the steps of:

enabling an options list to appear with respect to the user-defined discussion topic heading;

selecting an associate option on the options list; and

indicating at least one e-mail message; wherein the at least one e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the user-defined discussion topic heading to form the associated e-mail-to-topic group.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising the ~~step~~ steps of providing a show associations and a hide associations option on the options list; and

selecting at least one of the show associations option and the hide associations option on a reply e-mail message to be sent to a recipient.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of showing at least one of the user-defined discussion topic heading and associated e-mails of the

reply a sent e-mail message to a the recipient when if the show associations option is selected.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of hiding at least one of the discussion topic heading and associated e-mails of ~~a sent~~ the reply e-mail message to a the recipient when if the hide associations option is selected.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of providing a collapsability and expandability feature for the associated e-mail-to-topic group.

15. (Currently amended) An e-mail system comprising:

~~e-mail software for providing e-mail capabilities to a user; and~~  
an associate feature for providing e-mail organization capabilities to the user by organizing e-mail messages to form at least one of an associated group of e-mails or an associated e-mail-to-topic group in at least one of the user's mailboxes, wherein the associated group of e-mails is formed by the user causing an options list to appear with respect to at least one first e-mail message, selecting an associate feature from said options list, and indicating a second e-mail, wherein the second e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the at least one first e-mail to form the associated group of e-mails.

16. (Currently amended) The system of claim 15, ~~further comprising an~~ wherein the options list is provided with respect to each e-mail message, said options list ~~comprising~~ including said associate feature.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) The system of claim 16, wherein the associated e-mail-to-topic group is formed by creating a user-defined discussion topic heading, causing the options list to appear with respect to at least one e-mail message, selecting the associate feature from said options list, and indicating the discussion topic heading, wherein the at least one e-mail message is caused to be automatically associated to the discussion topic to form the associated e-mail-to-topic group and said discussion topic heading appears as an additional field in said at least one e-mail message.

19. (Original) The system of claim 16, further comprising a show associations feature and a hide associations feature on the options list.

20. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising an auto-process feature for automatically parsing a received e-mail to search for an existing discussion thread, wherein if an existing discussion thread is found, the received e-mail is automatically associated to the discussion thread.